

TAB

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1 Sep '61

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Cash Awards - Language Development Program

1. Paragraph 9 of this memorandum includes a recommendation for action by the DDC.

2. Since the Language Development Program was initiated there have been some very worthwhile accomplishments. First, direction was given to concerted efforts to ascertain who knew what about which languages within the Agency. Largely through the continued vigilance of the Office of Personnel a register of claimed proficiencies in foreign languages was established. The employee self-evaluation phase, initiated shortly after the Language Development Program was announced, eventually attained better than 95% coverage of all employees. Somewhat concurrently under Office of Training auspices, standardized tests to measure reading and writing proficiency were developed and panels of qualified linguists were identified to evaluate employee-claimed abilities in speaking, pronunciation and understanding. Now, some 54 months later, tests have been administered to more than 3,000 employees, and several hundred other employees have updated former claims by entering "disclaimers." The most recent of more than 8,000 test results and employee-disclaimer statements represent the degree of current validation of claimed proficiency in the Language Qualifications Register.

3. Unquestionably, the "spur" to testing has been the awards aspect of the Language Development Program. Some of the 3,090 who have submitted themselves to language testing have been tested numerous times. One employee took fifty-three tests in nineteen different languages and received forty-one cash awards. Another was tested forty-five times and received thirty-seven awards for fifteen languages; a third took forty-three tests and earned thirty-nine awards in fifteen languages. Many of the awards for this trio were for new achievements. These are significant individual accomplishments. But one may question the need for an Agency-wide program to recognize these feats, unless the net accomplishments throughout the Agency are truly worthwhile.

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4. There are sufficient indications that the cash awards aspect of the program is not so meaningful from an Agency viewpoint. From the fact that only 3,090 employees have been tested it is apparent that cash awards have not enticed other employees to be tested at all, and 821 persons who were tested did so for skill purposes only and were never awards applicants. Thus to date 2,269 persons have been awards candidates.

5. Of the 2,269 applicants for cash awards, it is discouraging to find that 4 of every 9 made no progress. Actually 481 dropped in proficiency after testing (or retesting), and 536 others maintained language abilities which they had, but achieved nothing more. Another 961 persons achieved some proficiency in one language only; 358 of these already had multi-language capabilities but 603 of them learned a measurable degree since 4 February 1957 in their only foreign language competence. Such an accomplishment by 603 people could be quite encouraging, except for the low level of achievement. After attaining awardable, but non-useable, elementary specialities 109 of them stopped; another 180 never got further than an intermediate reading or intermediate speaking ability. There were only 22 of these people who attained high comprehensive proficiency during this entire period -- of which eleven had this high level already in all but one of the five elements (reading, writing, pronunciation, speaking, understanding) measured by comprehensive testing.

6. It is, of course, true that we have not yet attained enough linguists in the common world languages but one can not be too heartened by the preponderance of effort for awards in the easy languages. More than 25% of all testing for awards has been for French, followed in popularity by German and Spanish. Less than one-third of all tests taken were for the more difficult, and more cash-rewarding, languages of groups II and III, although these latter difficulty groups include Russian and Arabic and contain thirty-nine of the fifty languages for which awards were authorized.

7. I do not wish to depreciate accomplishments which may be attributable to the impetus of cash awards, but I am surprised to find that after more than four years of cash bonuses, only 291 persons in the entire Agency have achievement awards in two or more languages. Eliminating those whose achievements were solely in Romance and Germanic languages, the number is less than 200 who acquired achievement awards in at least two different languages -- a few of whom learned awardable bits of from six to thirteen new languages. More arresting is the disturbing concentration of awards in these few cases, for of the more than \$600,000 awarded to date 25% of all awards dollars went to less than 5% of those who applied for awards!

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8. Aware of some of these data, the Language Development Committee agreed unanimously at its August meeting that the awards program has now served its intended purpose and that 4 February 1962 would be a logical termination date. The Committee felt that early notification to employees of this decision should precede the revising of a regulation or the implementing by OTR of procedures which may be necessary to cover any exceptional circumstances. Some thoughts on procedures are included in Attachment A. Changes in procedures and a revised regulation will be prepared and coordinated in the near future.

9. It is recommended that DDS arrange for signature by DCI of the notice (Attachment B) to alert employees that this action will be effective with the fifth anniversary of the Language Development Program.

MATTHEW BAIRD
Director of Training

Attachments

CONCURRENCE:

Deputy Director (Support)

Date

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